

Sora (*Porzana carolina*)

Conservation Concern Category: *High Concern*

Population Trend (PT)

Increasing—(Delany and Scott 2002: Sauer et al. 2001)

“breeding distribution in the US has likely become more localized during this century as a result of wetland loss and degradation...BBS estimates that population declined 3.3% annually 1966-1991...populations were stable 1982-1991 in Canada, but declined 8.5% annually in US during same period...declines were most severe in central NA, where wetland loss has been greatest...in eastern US both birds and hunters have declined substantially...” (Melvin and Gibbs 1996)

“continues to decline throughout much of its range, at least in NA...” (Taylor 1998)

In Ontario, after comparable field effort, the SORA was recorded in a similar number of 10 km squares during the second Breeding Bird Atlas 2001-2004 (644) as compared to the first Atlas, 1981-1985 (602) (2nd Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas, in prep.)

On the Great Lakes, for the period 1995 – 2004, Archer and Timmermans (2004) reported significant declines in SORAs ranging from -5.3%/yr to -11.9%/yr as determined through their Marsh Monitoring Program (MMP).

Using Canadian BBS data, SORAs showed a non-significant increase of 1.4% per year over the long term (1968-2002) and a significant – 7.8%/yr decrease over a shorter term (1993-2002)(Downs et al. 2003)

Estimated apparent stable population trend (Marshbird Workshop 2005) however Canadian Review Team suggests that MMP and short-term Canadian BBS data (fairly reliable for Sora) indicates population apparently declining and notes that Canada has a least 50% of the population/range.

PT FACTOR SCORE=4

Population Size (PS)

Unknown—(Delany and Scott 2002)

“local densities: 0.1 birds/ha (North Dakota), 1.3 birds/ha (Wisconsin), 1.6 birds/ha (Iowa), 0.6 pairs/ha (Colorado), 1.5-3.1 wintering birds/ha in Trinidad...” (Melvin and Gibbs 1996)

“common to frequent throughout Mexico...generally uncommon but probably overlooked in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Is, locally common to numerous in Panama, widespread but local in Costa Rica...” (Taylor 1998)

Estimated population size range (Marshbird Workshop 2005)

PS FACTOR SCORE=2

Threats to Breeding Populations (TB)

“habitat loss and degradation probably limit the population size...many of the wetlands most important for this species are amongst the most threatened in the US...predators include coyote, domestic cats, bobcat, harriers, hawks, falcons, owls...” (Taylor 1998)

“pesticides may be a threat in southern commercial rice fields...potentially susceptible to mortality from ingested lead shot...decreasing water levels reduced suitable habitat...birds may be vulnerable to human/researcher disturbance...” (Melvin and Gibbs 1996)

TB FACTOR SCORE=4

Threats to Non-breeding Populations (TN)

“the effects of annual harvest on Sora populations are unknown...low hunter interest and difficulty of hunting rails probably keeps annual kill within sustainable levels...fur trapping causes accidental mortality...harvesting of wild rice may disturb or reduce food available to local or migrant rails...migrating rails are commonly killed at tall, lighted towers, and probably in collisions with overhead wires...” (Melvin and Gibbs 1996)

“wild rice harvesting is an extremely localized economic activity and it is highly unlikely that such activity has a population-level impact on this species...” (R. Russell, pers.comm.)

“migrations are relatively conspicuous and it occurs in concentrations at beds of wild rice, giving rise to large bags by shooters...” (Taylor 1998)

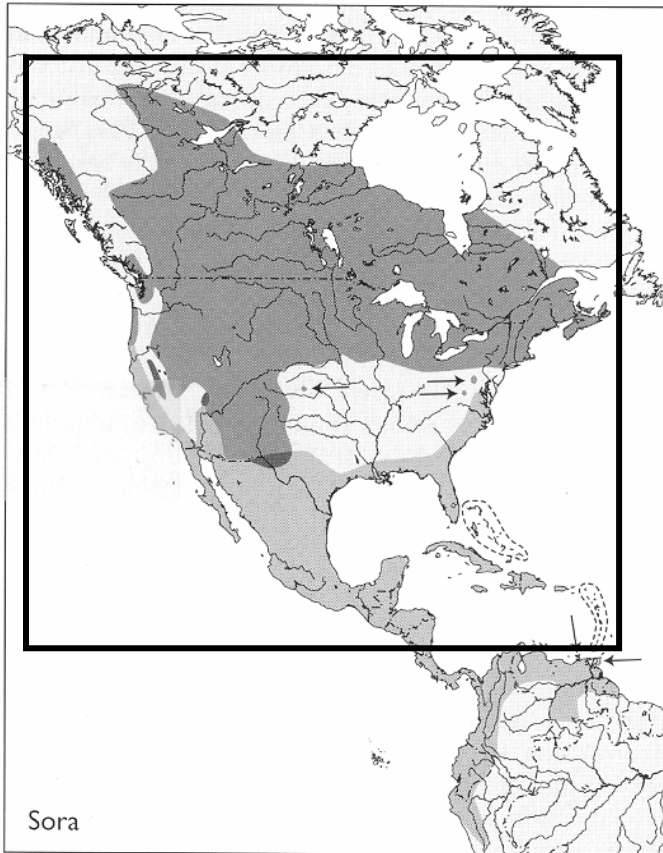
“Migrations aren’t conspicuous in Kansas and very few hunters likely get large bags...season bag/hunter in most states is <10 and very few get a daily bag of 25. Thus, hunting mortality is negligible.” (H. Hands, pers.comm.)

2003 and 2004 harvests were estimated at 21,200 and 39,600 respectively (see USFWS 2005).

Habitat loss and degradation emphasized as the major threats (Marshbird Workshop 2005).

TN FACTOR SCORE=4

Global Range (Taylor 1998; inset=plan area range)



Breeding Distribution (BD)

SE Alaska, Canada, USA (Delany and Scott 2002)

3,214,500 km² (plan area distribution; estimated from range maps)

BD FACTOR SCORE=3

Non-breeding Distribution (ND)

S USA, C America, Caribbean, Peru to the Guianas (Delany and Scott 2002)

6,271,500 km² (plan area distribution; estimated from range maps)

ND FACTOR SCORE=3

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- Delany, S. and S. Scott. 2002. *Waterbird Population Estimates – Third Edition. Wetlands International Global Series No. 12*, Wageningen, The Netherlands. Pp: 126
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Additional References:

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